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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a disc cartridge which receives a disc-like recording medium such as an
5 optical disc, a photomagnetic disc and the like therewithin.

Description of the Prior Art

Conventionally, the discs such as the optical disc and the like are used for a disc-like recording
10 medium. These discs are frequently used in a state of being received within the disc cartridge for the purpose of preventing a recording or reproducing error due to an attachment of oils and fats on a recording surface thereof.

In this case, the disc-like recording medium is
15 structured such that in the case that a recording density is fixed, a recording capacity of course becomes greater as a diameter thereof becomes greater. On the contrary, in the case of using the disc-like recording medium mentioned above as a recording medium for a portable recording and
20 reproducing apparatus, for example, a video camera and the like, a compact disc is excellent in portability.

Accordingly, there is a case that the disc used for a portable apparatus has a different diameter from the disc used for a stationary apparatus. At this time, a small-
25 sized disc cartridge is of course used for a disc cartridge

used for the portable disc. In the case that a recording method is the same and only a shape of the disc is different, if it is possible to mount the disc to the recording and reproducing apparatus, it is possible to
5 record or reproduce by means of recording and reproducing means provided in the recording and reproducing apparatus. Therefore, it is possible to record and reproduce the disc used for the portable apparatus in the stationary recording and reproducing apparatus by taking out only the disc from
10 the compact disc cartridge and replacing in the disc cartridge having the same outer shape as that of the disc cartridge in the stationary apparatus.

Further, in an optical disc, a recording operation is sensitive to a dirt and a reproducing
15 operation is relatively strong to a dirt, so that in the case of performing only a reproducing operation without again performing a recording operation in the once recorded disc, there exists a system in which a disc is taken out from the disc cartridge and only the disc can be treated.

20 Because of the reasons mentioned above, there is a requirement of inserting and removing the disc with respect to the disc cartridge. As a structure of taking out the disc from the disc cartridge, for example, there is a method of arranging a disc insertion and removal portion
25 in a part of the disc cartridge as shown in Japanese Patent Unexamined Publication No. 5-242626.

A description will be given of a structure for taking out the disc from the disc cartridge in accordance

with the conventional art with reference to Fig. 9. A disc insertion and removal port 12 is provided on a surface opposite to a surface on which a shutter 3 is arranged, and a disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10e is arranged there. Normally, the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10e is structured such that a locking hook 6e is fitted to a locking hole 7e arranged in the disc cartridge, and the disc insertion and removal port 12 is closed. At a time of taking out a disc 4, the locking hook 6e is removed from the locking hole 7e and the disc insertion and removal port opening, closing member 10e is rotated around a rotational support point 8e and the disc insertion and removal port 12 is opened, so that the disc 4 is inserted and removed.

Further, another conventional embodiment is shown in Fig. 10. In the conventional embodiment shown in Fig. 10, a disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10f is structured such as to be capable of being taken out from the disc cartridge 1. Further, at a time of attaching the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10f, the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10f is locked by a fitness between a locking hook 6f and a locking hole 7f, thereby preventing an erroneous falling off.

~~Still further, the other conventional embodiment is shown in Fig. 11. In the conventional embodiment shown in Fig. 11, in the same manner as that of the embodiment shown in Fig. 10, a disc insertion and removal opening and~~

In the disc cartridge as mentioned above, in the case of using the disc cartridge receiving disc once taken out therewithin in the recording and/or reproducing apparatus corresponding to the cartridge, it is necessary
5 that the apparatus detects the fact of being taken out. This is necessary for the purpose of inhibiting a recording operation of the disc which has been taken out to an outer portion or more frequently performing a recording check since a recording operation is sensitive to a dirt in the
10 optical disc as mentioned above. A method of detecting a history of taking out the disc will be described below with reference to Fig. 13. ¹¹ Fig. 13¹¹ shows a structure of opening and closing the disc insertion and removal port 12 by a disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member
15 10i in the same manner as that of the embodiment shown in Fig. 9, thereby inserting and removing the disc. A locking hook 6i and a locking hole 7i are fitted to each other and the locking member 11 is fitted to the locking hole 9, whereby a locking of the disc insertion and removal port
20 opening and closing member 10i is performed. When the locking hook 6i is removed from the locking hole 7i, the locking hook 6i is elastically deformed in an inner direction of the disc cartridge, so that a fitting can be again performed even after once removed. On the contrary,
25 when removing the locking member 11 from the locking hole 9, the locking member 11 is broken out from the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10i.

When opening the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10i, it is necessary to release these two kinds of locking means, however, when opening the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10i, 5 the locking member 11 becomes in a broken state, so that it is possible to recognize a history of taking out the disc by detecting the broken state.

As mentioned above, in the conventional art, when taking out the disc from the disc cartridge, the disc take- 10 out history is definitely left in the disc cartridge.

However, as a purpose of taking out the disc, in addition to the case of using a simple disc exclusively for reproducing the disc, there is a case of using the disc with moving the disc between the disc cartridges. In this 15 case, since a user does not positively handle the disc, there is a little possibility that a dirt is attached to the disc surface. Further, it can be avoided to be directly in contact with the disc by closely attaching the insertion and removal ports of the disc cartridge to each 20 other and moving the disc, so that a dirt is not attached. Even in this case, when the disc take-out history is left, an impossible recording treatment or an excessive recording check is performed although no dirt is attached to the disc, so that a usability of the disc is deteriorated.

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25 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a disc cartridge structured such that a history of taking

out a disc is left in the disc cartridge in the case of taking out the disc for the purpose of using the simple disc and is not left in the disc cartridge in the case that a use does not positively handle the disc such as a
5 movement of the disc between the disc cartridges.

In order to achieve the object, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a disc cartridge in which a disc insertion and removal port can be opened and closed by an insertion and removal port opening
10 and closing member, and locking means for locking the insertion and removal port opening and closing member when the insertion and removal port opening and closing member is closed and locking cancellation preventing means for preventing the locking means from canceling the locking of
15 the insertion and removal port opening and closing member are arranged in the disc cartridge.

Further, the locking cancellation preventing means is formed in a shape structured such as to cover at least a part of a portion in which the locking means is
20 exposed to an outer portion of the disc cartridge.

Still further, at least a part of the locking cancellation preventing means is irreversibly displaced so as to expose at least a part of the locking means which the locking cancellation preventing means covers to an outer
25 portion of the disc cartridge.

Furthermore, at least a part of the locking cancellation preventing means is arranged on a moving path necessary for the locking means to cancel the locking.

Moreover, the locking cancellation preventing means is irreversibly displaced out of the moving path from the moving path of the locking means and the locking means is made movable so as to cancel the locking.

5 Further, the locking cancellation preventing means is irreversibly displaced out of the moving path from the moving path of the locking means and the locking means is moved in a state of displacing the locking cancellation preventing means so as to cancel the locking.

10 Still further, the history of the insertion and removal of the disc can be recognized by detecting the state of the locking cancellation preventing means.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 Fig. 1 is a schematic view of a first embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which shows a structure of a disc cartridge;

Fig. 2 is a schematic view of the first embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which
20 shows a structure of locking means and locking cancellation preventing means of disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means;

Fig. 3 is a schematic view of the first embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which
25 explains a method of locking and removing the locking means of the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means without breaking the locking cancellation preventing means;

Fig. 4 is a schematic view of a second embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which shows a structure of a disc cartridge;

Fig. 5 is a schematic view of the second
5 embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which shows a structure of locking means and locking cancellation preventing means of disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means;

Fig. 6 is a schematic view of the second
10 embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which explains a method of locking and removing the locking means of the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means without breaking the locking cancellation preventing means;

Fig. 7 is a schematic view of a third embodiment
15 in accordance with the present invention, which shows a structure of locking means and locking cancellation preventing means of disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means;

Fig. 8 is a schematic view of the third
20 embodiment in accordance with the present invention, which explains a method of locking and removing the locking means of the disc insertion and removal port opening and closing means without breaking the locking cancellation preventing
25 means;

Fig. 9 is a schematic view of a conventional art, which shows a structure of inserting and removing a disc in a disc cartridge;

Fig. 10 is a schematic view of a conventional art, which shows a structure of inserting and removing a disc in a disc cartridge;

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5 ~~Fig. 11 is a schematic view of a conventional art, which shows a structure of inserting and removing a disc in a disc cartridge;~~ *and*

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1 ~~Fig. 12 is a schematic view of a conventional art, which shows a structure of inserting and removing a disc in a disc cartridge;~~ *and*

10 ~~Fig. 13 is a schematic view of a conventional art, which shows a structure of a history of taking out a disc in a disc cartridge.~~

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Embodiments in accordance with the present
15 invention will be described below with reference to Figs. 1 to 8.

A first embodiment in accordance with the present invention will be described below with reference to Figs. 1 to 3. Fig. 1 is a schematic view which shows an internal
20 structure of a disc cartridge in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 1, a disc cartridge 1 is provided with a disc insertion and removal port through which a disc 4 passes when inserting and removing the disc 4. When the disc cartridge 1
25 receives the disc 4 therewithin, a disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10a is locked to the disc insertion and removal port 12 by locking means.

The locking means in accordance with the present embodiment is constituted by a locking hook 6a and a locking hole 7a and is structured such that the locking hook 6a is fitted to the locking hole 7a, thereby being locked. In this
5 case, the locking hole 7a is structured such as not to pass through, and such that it is impossible to cancel the locking from an outer portion of the disc cartridge 1 through the locking hole 7a.

In Fig. 2, a locking state of the locking means
10 and a method of canceling the locking will be described. Fig. 2 is a schematic view which shows details of a locking cancellation preventing member 16a corresponding to the locking means and the locking cancellation preventing means. When the disc insertion and removal port opening
15 and closing member 10 is attached to the disc cartridge 1, the locking hook 6a is fitted and locked to the locking hole 7a as shown in Fig. 2A. Further, since the locking cancellation preventing member 16a is arranged in a lower portion of the locking hook 6a, the locking hook 6a is
20 hardly exposed to an outer portion, so that it is hard for a user of the disc cartridge to take out the locking hook 6a from the locking hole 7a in this state. When the user takes out the disc from the disc cartridge 1 for the purpose of using the disc as a single one, the locking
25 cancellation preventing member 16a is broken as shown in Fig. 2B. The locking hook 6a is exposed to an outer portion by breaking the locking cancellation preventing member 16a so as to take out, so that it is possible to

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remove the locking hook 6a. In this case, the take-out history is recognized by detecting the breakage of the locking cancellation preventing member 16a. Further, in the case that it is not desired to mark the disc take-out history such as a movement of the disc between the disc cartridges, the disc is taken out by removing the locking hook 6a without breaking the locking cancellation preventing member 16a as shown in Fig. 2C.

A description will be given of a method of removing the locking hook 6a without breaking the locking cancellation preventing member 16a with reference to Fig. 3. An opening portion 19a which is small enough that the user can not operate the locking hook 6a by a finger is provided between the locking cancellation preventing member 16a and the disc cartridge 1. The locking hook 6a is moved by inserting the locking cancellation member 18a from the opening portion 19a, as shown in Fig. 3B, thereby being removed from the locking hole 7a. A locking cancellation member 18a is, for example, provided near the disc insertion and removal portion of the disc cartridge in a destination for the disc, so that a cancellation of the locking and a moving operation of the disc can be both performed by pressing the disc cartridge 1 in accordance with the present invention.

Next, a second embodiment in accordance with the present invention will be described below with reference to Figs. 4 to 6. Fig. 4 is a schematic view which shows a structure of a disc cartridge in accordance with the second

embodiment of the present invention. The present
embodiment has the disc insertion and removal port 12 in
the same manner as that of the first embodiment, and when
the disc cartridge 1 receives the disc 4 therewithin, a
5 disc insertion and removal port opening and closing member
10j is locked to the disc insertion and removal port 12 by
locking means. The locking means in accordance with the
present embodiment is also constituted by a locking hook 6j
and a locking hole 7j, and the locking hook 6j is fitted to
10 the locking hole 7j so as to be locked. Further, in the
case of the disc cartridge which has not taken out the
disc, the structure is made such that the disc cartridge 1
and the locking cancellation preventing member 16j cover
almost all of the member having the locking hook 6j. In
15 this case, the locking hole 7j is not penetrated, so that
it is structured such that it is impossible to cancel the
locking by inserting into the locking hole 7j from the
outer portion of the disc cartridge 1.

A description will be given of a locking state of
20 the locking means and a method of canceling the locking
with reference to Fig. 5. Fig. 5 is a schematic view which
shows a detail of the locking cancellation preventing
member 16j corresponding to the locking means and the
locking cancellation preventing means. Left views in Figs.
25 5A to 5C are outside drawings near a portion in which the
locking cancellation preventing member 16j is arranged, and
right views show an inner structure thereof. When the disc

insertion and removal port opening and closing member 10j is attached to the disc cartridge 1, the locking hook 6j is fitted and locked to the locking hole 7j as shown in Fig. 5A. Further, since the disc cartridge 1 and the locking cancellation preventing member 16j cover almost all of the surface in the member having the locking hook 6j, it is hard for the user of the disc cartridge to remove the locking hook 6j from the locking hole 7j. In order that the user uses the disc as a single unit, it is necessary to break the locking cancellation preventing member 16j, expose a lower portion of the member having the locking hook 6j to an outer portion and displace the portion in a direction of an arrow so as to take out the locking hook 6j, as shown in Fig. 5B. In this case, the disc apparatus recognizes the disc take-out history of the disc cartridge 1 by detecting the breakage of the locking cancellation preventing member 16j. Further, in the case that it is not desired to mark the disc take-out history such as a movement of the disc between the disc cartridges, the disc is taken out by removing the locking hook 6j without breaking the locking cancellation preventing member 16j as shown in Fig. 5C.

Next, a description will be given of a method of removing the locking hook 6j without breaking the locking cancellation preventing member 16j with reference to Fig. 6. An opening portion 19j which is small enough that the user can not operate the locking hook 6j by a finger is provided between the locking cancellation preventing member

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16j and the disc cartridge 1. The locking hook 6j is moved by inserting the locking cancellation member 18j from the opening portion 19a, as shown in Fig. 6B, thereby being removed from the locking hole 7j. A locking cancellation member 18j is, for example, provided within the disc cartridge in a destination for the disc, so that the disc is moved by moving the locking cancellation preventing member 18j and canceling the locking after pressing the disc cartridge 1 in accordance with the present invention.

10 Further, in the case of the present embodiment, as is different from the first embodiment, the locking cancellation preventing member 16j is exposed to a front surface of the disc cartridge or a back surface thereof. Accordingly, it is possible to detect the take-out history

15 from the surface of the disc cartridge 1 or the back surface thereof, so that it is possible to increase a freedom in designing an arrangement of a sensor in the side of the disc apparatus.

Next, a third embodiment in accordance with the present invention will be described below with reference to Figs. 7 and 8. Fig. 7 is a schematic view which shows a locking state of locking means and a method of canceling the locking in accordance with the third embodiment of the present invention. The locking hook 6b is fitted to the locking hole 7b so as to perform the locking in the same manner as that of the first embodiment. Further, in order to take out the locking hook 6b from the locking hole 7b, it is necessary to move in an inner direction of the disc

cartridge 1, however, a locking cancellation preventing member 16b is arranged on the moving path. In this state, the locking hook 6b is interfered with the locking cancellation preventing member 16b and can not be moved, so
5 that the locking can not be cancelled. When taking out the disc from the disc cartridge 1 in order that the user uses the disc as a single unit, the locking cancellation preventing member 16b is broken as shown in Fig. 7B. the locking hook 6b can be moved by breaking the locking
10 cancellation preventing member 16b so as to take out, so that it is possible to take out the locking hook 6b. In this case, the disc apparatus recognizes the disc take-out history by detecting the breakage of the locking cancellation preventing member 16b. Further, in the case
15 that it is not desired to mark the disc take-out history such as a movement of the disc between the disc cartridges, the locking cancellation is performed by elastically deforming the locking cancellation preventing member 16b and moving the locking hook 6b in this state, as shown in
20 Fig. 7C.

A description will be given of a method of taking out the locking hook 6b while deforming the locking cancellation preventing member 16b with reference to Fig. 8. It is necessary that a deformation of the locking
25 cancellation preventing member 16b and a movement of the locking hook 6b are performed substantially at the same time. Accordingly, as shown in Fig. 8A, by pressing a locking cancellation member 18b having a fork-like front

end portion to the locking hook 6b and the locking
cancellation preventing member 16b, it is possible to move
the locking hook 6b while deforming the locking
cancellation preventing member 16b as shown in Fig. 8B so
5 as to be taken out from the locking hole 7b. The locking
cancellation member 18b is, for example, provided near a
disc insertion and removal port of the disc cartridge in a
destination for the disc, and a cancellation of the locking
and a moving operation of the disc can be both performed by
10 pressing the disc cartridge 1 in accordance with the
present invention.

As mentioned above, the present invention can
provide the disc cartridge structured such that a history
of taking out the disc is left in the disc cartridge in the
15 case that the user takes out the disc and uses the disc as
a single unit, and a history of taking out the disc is not
left in the disc cartridge in a state that the user does
not positively perform a handling of the disc such as a
movement of the disc between the disc cartridges.

20 In accordance with the structure mentioned above,
in the case that the user takes out the disc and uses the
disc as a single unit, a history of taking out the disc is
left in the disc cartridge, and in a state that the user
does not positively perform a handling of the disc such as
25 a movement of the disc between the disc cartridges, a
history of taking out the disc is not left in the disc
cartridge.